An AEZ has been set up in the State of Uttaranchal to boost export of floriculture products. Financial assistance amounting to Rs. 10 lakhs has been extended by APEDA to the Government of Jammu and Kashmir for preparation of a project report for development of floriculture in the State.

Withdrawal of MNF status given to Pakistan

2291. SHRI LALIT SURI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Pakistan has made it clear that Most Favoured Nation status cannot be granted to India unless Kashmir dispute is resolved;

(b) if so, whether India would also withdraw that status given to Pakistan; and

(c) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) to (c) Pakistan has so far not granted MFN status to India despite its obligations, including under the WTO, and has cited extraneous political, economic and other reasons for this. The matter of grant of MFN status by Pakistan to India has been raised repeatedly with Pakistan. Government has drawn attention of Pakistan to its obligation to grant MFN status to India, and that this step would serve as an indicator of Pakistan's intention to improve bilateral and regional economic cooperation, and to have normal trade and economic relations with India. There is no proposal as of now to withdraw MFN status given to Pakistan.

Subsidy to small tea growers

2292. SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the details with regard to the tea leaf processing units functioning in the country alongwith the facilities being provided to these units by Government;

(b) whether the small tea growers have been seriously affected due to the steep fall in tea prices in the country particularly in Tamil Nadu;

(c) if so, the details thereof alongwith the action taken by Government to mitigate the suffering of small tea growers;

(d) whether Government proposes to grant subsidy to the small tea growers in the country for growing tea leaves; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

- THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) 1607 tea processing units in the country are registered with the Tea Board at present, of which 1033 are Estate Factories, 536 are Bought Leaf Factories, 24 are Cooperative Factories and 14 are Instant Tea Factories. Facilities being provided to these tea processing units include subsidy for acquiring modern processing machinery, packaging and blending machinery and for obtaining quality assurance certificates.

(b) and (c) The Indian Tea Industry including the small tea growers has been affected due to the fall in prices during the last few years mainly due to the imbalance in supply demand position. Even though there was an improvement in auction prices of tea during 2004, the average auction prices have been lower in 2005. The decline in prices could partly be attributed to supply of comparatively poor quality green leaf to the processing factories and poor manufacturing practices followed by some factories. Good quality leaf continues to get reasonably good prices and better quality made tea also fetches good prices despite the decline in average prices. There has been some improvement in tea prices recently due to various quality control measures taken by the Tea Board.

A number of steps have been taken by the Government and the Tea Board to help the small tea growers. These include implementation of price sharing formula between the small tea growers and manufacturers of tea with effect from 1st April 2004 in order to ensure that the small tea growers get a reasonable share of the price obtained by the manufacturer for made tea and implementation of a Special Tea Term Loan (STTL) which *inter alia* provides for sanctioning of working capital limits up to Rs. 2 lakhs at a concessional rate of interest not exceeding 9% per annum for small tea growers. Government has also set up a Price Stabilization Fund, the benefits of which are available to small tea growers having holding up to 4 hectares. Besides, financial assistance by way of subsidy

and grant in aid is extended to small growers for various developmental activities such as new planting, replanting, rejuvenation pruning and infilling the vacancies, creation of irrigation facilities, organizing themselves into self help groups, participation in the study tours etc. Tea Board has also taken steps to create quality awareness among the small growers.

(d) and (e) While financial assistance by way of subsidy and grant in aid is extended to small growers for various developmental activities, there is no proposal to provide subsidy for growing tea *per se*.

Exports and Imports

2293. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) details of exports to each country during the last financial year;

(b) details of imports from each country during the last financial year;

(c) whether Government had set any targets for exports and imports with each country for the present financial year;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) present position of such exports and imports as on date?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) India has trade with around 200 countries. The details of exports to and imports from various countries during the last financial year are given in the publication 'Monthly Statistics of Foreign Trade of India Vol. I (Exports)' and 'Monthly Statistics of Foreign Trade of India Vol. II (Imports)' of 2005 published by the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence & Statistics which are also available in the Parliament Library.

(c) to (d) The Government does not set country-wise targets for exports and imports. The Government, however, fixes an overall annual target for exports. During the current financial year 2005-06, the annual export target was fixed at US$ 92 billion.

(e) According to the latest provisional data available from the DGCI&S for the period April-October, 2005-2006, India's exports were valued at US $ 51.5 billion and imports were valued at US $ 75 billion.